

Message Text

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SUBJ: MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE: MEETING WITH NETHERLANDS OFFICIALS

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN 17 OCTOBER MEETING WITH NETHERLANDS MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS OFFICIALS IN THE HAGUE, US DEPUTY DEFENSE ADVISOR (B/G BOWMAN) OUTLINED US VIEWS ON KEY ELEMENTS OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE. DUTCH REPS STATED AGREEMENT WITH MOST PARTS OF US DISCUSSION PAPER INCLUDING IDEA OF A COMPREHENSIVE MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE CONTAINING A LONG RANGE CONCEPT FOR NATO AND PROVIDING AGREED GUIDANCE FOR ALLIED NATIONS AS WELL AS NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES. DUTCH REPS ALSO ENDORSED GOAL OF ACHIEVING IMPROVED ALLIANCE CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY THROUGH REASONALIZATION, SPECIALIZATION, STANDARDIZATION, AND INCREASED FLEXIBILITY. HOWEVER, THEY FELT THAT US DISCUSSION PAPER WAS TOO OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PRESENT NATO CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY AND IN THAT RESPECT INCONSISTENT WITH MC 161 AND DRAFT MILITARY APPRECIATION. WHEN PRESSED ON THESE POINTS, THEY SAID IT WAS NOT AS MUCH A CONFIDENTIAL

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QUESTION OF THE SPECIFIC WORDS AS A MATTER QUOTE FLAVOUR UNQUOTE AND THEY WAY POLITICIANS WOULD INTERPRET THE PAPER. THEY URGED INCLUDING A MENTION OF NATO CONVENTIONAL WEAKNESSES AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE WARSAW PACT. THEY FELT THAT AN EFFECTIVE CONVENTIONAL

DEFENSE WAS NECESSARY AND ATTAINABLE BUT WOULD REQUIRE MAINTAINING ALLIED DEFENSE EFFORTS, MORE ALLIANCE COOPERATION, AND CONCRETE STEPS TO ACHIEVE TIMELY POLITICAL DECISIONS ON MOBILIZATION AND REINFORCEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. ON 17 OCTOBER, US DEPDEFAD (B/G BOWMAN) MET WITH NETHERLANDS OFFICIALS AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE IN THE HAGUE TO DISCUSS US POSITION ON MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE. DUTCH REPRESENTATIVES INCLUDED LT GEN WIGTING, CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF; COMMODORE DE REGT, CHIEF OF STAFF, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF; MR. RUSSELL, INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL AFFAIRS CHIEF, MOD; AND MR. DEUYVERMAN, MILITARY COOPERATION CHIEF, NATO OFFICE, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS. A SEPARATE MEETING INCLUDED MEMBERS OF NAVY, ARMY, AND AIR FORCE STAFFS AND ALL ABOVE, EXCEPT GENRRAL WIGTING. MR. CARSTEN, DUTCH DEFENSE ADVISOR AT NATO ACCOMPANIED GEN BOWMAN.

2. TO BEGIN DISCUSSION BOWMAN OUTLINED MAIN ELEMENTS OF US POSITION ON MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE:

A. IMPORTANCE OF CONVENTIONAL WAR CAPABILITY TO THE NATO TRIAD OF STRATEGIC, TACTICAL NUCLEAR, AND CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE;

B. US VIEW THAT NATO HAS MANY CONVENTIONAL WAR STRENGTHS SUCH AS BETTER TANKS, BETTER ANTI-TANK WEAPONS, SUPERIOR TACTICAL AIR WEAPONS AND AIRCRAFT. ALSO, WARSAW PACT HAS WEAKNESSES IN SUCH AREAS AS TRAINING, LOGISTICS, AND AIR CAPABILITY. AS A RESULT, A CONVENTIONAL BALANCE IS WITHIN REACH IN SPITE OF SUCH COMMONLY MENTIONED FACTORS AS NUMBER OF SOVIET TANKS;

C. NATO HAS MANY IMPORTANT EFFORTS UNDERWAY TO IMPROVE FURTHER CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY THROUGH WEAPON MODERNIZATION, RATIONALIZATION, SPECIALIZATION, STANDARDIZATION, AND INCREASED FLEXIBILITY;

D. MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE SHOULD OUTLINE THE NATO LONG RANGE DEFENSE CONCEPT AND TIE TOGETHER THE MANY EFFORTS OF ALLIED COUNTRIES AND NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES DESIGNED TO PROVED A BETTER DEFENSE.

3. GEN WIGTING, AS WELL AS SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES, QUESTIONED WHETHER US EVALUATION OF NATO CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY GAVE ADEQUATE WEIGHT TO THE DIFFICULTY OF OBTAINING POLITICAL CONFIDENTIAL

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DECISION TO MOBILIZE AND REINFORCE. BOWMAN POINTED OUT THAT US DISCUSSION PAPER CALLED FOR NATIONAL STUDIES OF MEASURES WHICH COULD BE TAKEN TO PREPARE NATO FOR WAR ON RECEIPT OF FIRST INTELLIGENCE INDICATORS, RATHER THAN WAITING FOR NATO ALERT. IF NATIONS GRANTED MODS AUTHORITY TO CALL UP CERTAIN RESERVES AND MORE CRITICAL FORCE ELEMENTS THEY WOULD SEND A SIGNAL TO THE SOVIETS WHICH SHOULD STRENGTHEN DETERRENCE. IN A CRISIS SITUATION IF ALL NATO NATIONS HAD SUCH PLANS AND ARRANGEENTS, AT LEAST SOME ALLIES WOULD TAKE STEPS WHICH WOULD IMPROVE NATO CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY AND INCREASE DETERRENCE.

4. GENERAL WIGTING, COMMODORE DE REGT, AND OTHER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES EMPHASIZED THEIR VIEW THAT US DISCUSSION PAPER

ON MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE IS NOT CONSISTENT WITH MC 161 AND DRAFT MILITARY APPRECIATION. WHEN PRESSED THEY SAID IT WAS NOT AS MUCH A QUESTION OF THE SPECIFIC WORDS AS A MATTER OF QUOTE FLAVOUR UNQUOTE AND THE WAY POLITICIANS WOULD INTERPRET PAPER. THEY PARTICULARLY OBJECTED TO PARAGRAPH 7 IN THE US PAPER AND URGED MENTIONING NATO CONVENTIONAL WEAKNESSES AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE WARSAW PACT. THEY ALSO ARGUED THAT SCENARIOS IN US PARAGRAPH 23 OVERSTATED SOVIET LOGISTICAL DIFFICULTIES. BOWMAN ASKED FOR SPECIFIC CRITICISMS BASED ON MC 161 WHICH US COULD THEN ANALYZE. HE SUGGESTED THAT A NATO POSITION WHICH STATED THAT A GOOD CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE WAS IN REACH MIGHT PRODUCE MORE SUPPORT FROM POLITICIANS THAN STATING THAT THE SITUATION WAS NEARLY HOPELESS. DUTCH REPRESENTATIVES AGREED THAT THIS WAS POSSIBLE.

5. DUTCH REPRESENTATIVES ALSO ARGUED THAT US PAPER NEGLECTED NATO TRIAD IN FAVOR OF WHAT AMOUNTED TO EMPHASIS ON CONVENTIONAL WAR ONLY. BOWMAN RESPONDED THAT THERE WAS NO INTENTION TO NEGLECT THE NATO TRIAD AND THAT US PAPER EMPHASIZED CONVENTIONAL CAPABILITY BECAUSE THAT WAS THE SEGMENT OF THE TRIAD NEEDING GREATEST IMPROVEMENT. US IS WORKING ON STRATEGIC WAR IMPROVEMENT, AND NPG WAS CONSIDERING TACTICAL NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION.

6. DUTCH NAVY REPRESENTATIVES OBJECTED TO THE FACT THAT US DISCUSSION PAPER GIVES NO ATTENTION TO THE NAVAL CAPABILITIES OF THE ALLIANCE, EXCEPT IN ONE SECTION NOT YET SUPPLIED. BOWMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF DRAFT MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE IN EFFECT RULED OUT ANY NEED TO KEEP SEA LINES OPEN SINCE IT FOCUSED ONLY ON FORCES REQUIRED FOR A 15DAY CONFLICT. CONFIDENTIAL

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US POSITION INSISTS THAT THE ALLIANCE SHOULD NOT COLLAPSE ON THE 16TH DAY, OR ANY PARTICULAR DAY, AND THAT KEEPING THE SEA LINES OPEN THEREFORE IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO NATO ABILITY TO OUTLAST THE PACT. US SECTION ON NAVAL FORCES WOULD REFLECT THIS POSITION.

7. DUTCH REPRESENTATIVES SUGGESTED THAT US INSISTENCE THAT CONVENTIONAL FORCES ARE IN BALANCE COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT MBFR NEGOTIATIONS SINCE NATO IS ATTEMPTING TO OBTAIN GREATER REDUCTIONS ON THE PART OF THE PACT. BOWMAN POINTED OUT THAT MBFR REDUCTIONS APPLIED ONLY TO THE MBFR AREA WHEREAS THE OVERALL CONVENTIONAL BALANCE MUST INCLUDE ALL FORCES THAT CAN REASONABLY BE BROUGHT TO BEAR IN A CONFLICT. IN EFFECT, MBFR IS DESIGNED TO REDUCE THOSE FORCES IN THE AREA CLOSEST TO THE NATO/PACT BORDER, AND SINCE THE SOVIETS HAVE MORE FORCES DEPLOYED TO THE FORWARD AREA, THEIR REDUCTION SHOULD BE GREATER IN THAT AREA. THIS IS NOT INCONSISTENT WITH THE VIEW THAT AN OVERALL CONVENTIONAL BALANCE IS WITHIN REACH.

8. IN CONCLUSION, DUTCH REPRESENTATIVES STATED THAT THE MEETING WAS VERY USEFUL AND REMOVED SOME OF THEIR WORRIES ABOUT THE US PAPER. THEY POINTED OUT THAT THEY WERE IN FULL AGREEMENT WITH

BY FAR THE LARGEST PART OF THAT PAPER. THEY FELT THAT AN
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BUT WOULD REQUIRE MAINTAINING ALLIED DEFENSE EFFORTS, MORE
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